


GORDEN & LINCOLN

DRAWER 10D

SLAVERY ATTITUDE

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Slavery

Attitudes about Slavery

Cobden & Lincoln

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

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DOCTHER NOTABLES OF HIS DAY.

Cobden, E. D. Baker, Chase, Curtin, Winner Davis, Thad Jones, Simon Cameron and Oibers.
[Written by JAMES MATLACK SCOVEL for The Sunday Republican.]

It was early in the war. Richard Cobden, to whom I took letters from Abraham Lincoln and Horace Greeley, lived near the beautiful country town of Haselmere, in Sussex, Eng., surrounded by his household gods and his ancestral oaks, on the same homestead once owned by his father, which was a gift from his grateful constituents,—the people of England,—after the great triumph of the anti-corn law agitation, led by Cobden, Bright, Huskisson and Peel. It was known to only a few in England that Mr Cobden had, just before the civil war, made large investments in the state of Illinois, and had been tendered the position of president of the Illinois Central railroad. He was inclined to accept the place, and had partially perfected his plans to become an American citizen.

The speedy downfall of Lord Palmerston, then premier, and the rapid growth of liberalism in England, fostered and advanced by the pending struggle in America, changed Mr Cobden's plans, and before the American conflict ended John Bright was a member of a liberal cabinet, with Gladstone as prime minister. Cobden cordially hated Lord Palmerston, and he had much to do with his downfall. No man in England felt a keener interest in the American question than did the great English commoner. He made no secret of his sympathy with the cause of the Union. He had been in constant correspondence with Mr Lincoln, and felt for the many-sided American patriot the deepest affection. Both were engaged in a national and far-reaching struggle for the liberation of humanity, and defeat in America meant another century of tory domination in Great Britain. By a sea-coal fire, late in the November night, Mr Cobden gave me his opinion of Abraham Lincoln in these words: "This century has produced no man like him. Napoleon said, 'The great heart makes the great soldier.' Lincoln is not only a man of great heart, but he is a man of excellent understanding. The moral philosophers tell us that the intellect works best through the sensibilities. And he is a man who has risen from manual labor to the presidency of a great people, and to me he seems to be the one man God has raised up to give courage and enthusiasm to a people unused to the arts of war, fighting what seems to me to be a doubtful battle, in the greatest conflict of modern times. I like Mr Lincoln's intense veneration for what is true and good. His sense of justice is exalted, and yet, while he has never studied statesmanship in modern schools, he is capable of writing, at times, monumental English. He has some of the same characteristics that made William the Silent great; and like Azeglio, the Italian statesman, he abjures the political finesse of Machiavelli, but rests his claims to victorious statesmanship on his wonderful good sense and his absolute good faith. His reason seems to rule despotically over his other faculties, and his conscience and his heart are ruled by his reason. It is Pascal who says sublimity is often encountered in daily life, and I know of nothing more sublime than the patience of your American president. He seems to be bent on making a republic the great stature of an honest man. I speak of your struggle as doubtful, because Mr Lincoln will have more to contend against in the hostility of foreign powers than in the shattered and scattered resources of the confederacy."

Mr Cobden predicted the triumph of our arms, but he died before he had more than a Pisgah view of the promised land, and John Bright held the place intended for Cobden in the cabinet, till his Quaker notions rebelled against a war in Egypt for conquest, and he cast from him cabinet honors, never again to resume office as the chief of the government.

We sat till the early hours of the morning, and I recall the great commoner's attitude of mind to his colleagues, the great orator in the passage from

those speech Mr Cobden quoted. "John Bright said in a number of eloquent places: 'Believe America a land that dares to be great, and prosperous, and happy, without a monarchy, without an aristocracy, without a priesthood, who are the licensed vendors of that salvation wrought by love.'"

Mr Cobden had some traits in common with Mr Lincoln. He had neither offensive egotism nor pretentious pride. He was a quiet, sincere and unaffected gentleman. Of his introduction to the American minister at the court of St. James,—Charles Francis Adams,—Mr Cobden remarked: "Mr Adams is as cold as one of his own Massachusetts codfish; and when introduced, only touches the extreme tips of your fingers." This was the same Mr Adams who, after the death of Abraham Lincoln, delivered a lecture in Boston, to establish the fact that for all the victories in diplomacy, on the battlefield, and in statecraft, President Lincoln was indebted to the superior culture and cunning of William H. Seward.

Mr Seward himself was too great to ever lay claim to such distinction. To the secretary of state's knowledge of the world, and his power of reaching men even by devious ways, Mr Lincoln often yielded,—but the masterful spirit in that "combine" was not that of the ex-governor of New York. Lincoln was the master, Seward was the complement of the master. But there was nothing offensive nor arrogant in the president. He took his proper place. He was a natural-born McGregor. He knew his rights, and he dared maintain them. But the president of the United States was also a great politician.

Let me first relate how Mr Lincoln started Washington in the first year of his administration. Gen Edward D. Baker was a senator from California. He was as eloquent as Bossuet or Fenelon. He had the conscience of the fight in him, and he was the only senator in Congress who, sword in hand, fell in battle with his face to the foe. When Ball's Bluff had been reached, under the unfortunate orders of Gen Stone, in the deadly rain of the confederate artillery, the boys, who loved their general, said: "Gen Baker, lie down." He bowed, but said: "Soldiers, a general cannot lie down in the face of the enemy." A rifle ball through the forehead, as he spoke, ended a noble life.

But when Senator Baker first took his seat in the Senate, and while he lived, he had unbounded power and influence with Lincoln. He even named many of the office-holders in Oregon and Nevada, for the senator had practiced law in both states. A delegation from Nevada called at the White House, with written charges against Baker, affecting his moral character, and protesting against his influence with the president regarding official patronage on the Pacific slope.

Together in Sangamon county had "Ed" Baker and "Abe" Lincoln toiled through the sparsely settled country, through doubt and danger, and hunger and cold, till both became eminent lawyers in the early history of Illinois. The president with unusual sternness in his face read the protest against Senator Baker. There were a dozen prominent men from the Wild and Woolly West, who felt sure they had spiked Senator Baker's gun. Mr Lincoln rose to his full height, tore the protest to shreds, cast the fragments in the fire, and as he bowed the protestants out of the east room of the White House he said: "Gentlemen, I know Senator Baker. We boys together in Illinois. I believe in

And you have taken the wrong way to make yourself influential with administration at Senator Baker's expense!" The intelligence of this stubborn lion to his old friend and companion read over Washington like wild-fire, and after that day nobody

chusets. "If ever this free people, if ever this government itself, shall become utterly demoralized, it will come from this human wriggle and struggle for office; a way to live without work," adding, with charming frankness and inimitable naivete, "from which 'complaint' I am not free myself!"

The wit of the president is illustrated in a story Orville H. Browning, a great Illinois lawyer, told of him. A gentleman driving along the Springfield road was accosted by Mr Lincoln, who said: "Will you have the goodness to take my overcoat to town for me?" "With pleasure," replied the stranger, "but how will you get it again?" "O, very readily," said Mr Lincoln, "as I intend to remain in it."

The campaign in which Gov A. G. Curtin was for a second time made governor of Pennsylvania was a crucial period, full of deepest anxiety to the president. Desiring to show his appreciation of the unselfish devotion of a young lawyer, who took prominent part in that political struggle, Mr Lincoln sent for him, and said: "You have the right idea of patriotism,—it is a duty. You have never asked for anything, and I want to send you on a confidential mission to Europe. Go see Secretary Seward." In one week he was sent to Europe. Gov Morgan of New York sent to the young attorney a draft for \$2000, and it was not till his return from Europe that Gov Morgan assured him that all the arrangements for the journey abroad were planned and perfected by President Lincoln, even to sending the draft for \$2000.

To an applicant eager for office he said: "There are no enolunents that properly belong to patriotism. I brought nothing with me to the White House, nor am I likely to carry anything out."

And the hand so often eagerly stretched out to save from death the young soldier, or sentinel overcome by sleep at his post, could unhesitatingly set his seal of approval to the finding of a court-martial dismissing a soldier from the service for drunkenness. I sat beside the president in Washington on a balmy summer day, which I shall not soon forget. There was that warm, sympathetic silence in the atmosphere that gives to Indian summer days almost a human tenderness of feeling,—a delicate huzze, that seemed only the kindly air made visible. An officer wearing the insignia of a colonel's rank came in, and Mr Lincoln was full of sympathy, which he shed like the summer rain, "which makes the fields it hastes to bright and green." He drew his chair near the colonel, whose complaint was, in brief, that he had unjustly been dismissed from the army for drunkenness on duty. The officer had a good and gallant record. Lincoln knew him. He never forgot such a case. The lines in the soldier's face told their own story of long and unrestrained indulgence. Mr Lincoln heard the story patiently. He rose up, and as was his habit when moved deeply, he grasped the soldier's right hand in both his own, and said: "Colonel, I know your story. But you carry your own condemnation in your face." The tears were in his voice, and the soldier walked out without a word. The only comment the president made subsequently to me was, "I dare not restore this man to his rank and give him charge of a thousand men, when he 'puts an enemy into his month to steal away his brains.'"

No more touching incident in Lincoln's life has ever appeared than that contained in a story told by Gen Sherman, at a dinner at the Hoffman house. It came directly from William H. Seward. It was the habit of that gracious optimist, Mr Seward, to spend his Sunday morning with President Lincoln, in the east room of the White House. After the president had been shaved in his own room he accompanied his secretary of state across Pennsylvania avenue, and over to the Seward mansion, afterward occupied by Secretary Blaine. One Sunday morning a tall, military figure was pacing up and down in front of Secretary Seward's house. It was during the last year of the war. He saluted the president in military fashion as the two statesmen passed him; but there was something in his expression that arrested Mr Lincoln's attention. The soldier was a lieutenant-colonel in a Pennsylvania regiment.

Emotional himself, the president was swift to detect unusual emotion in others. He walked on to the office to be addressed, and shook hands with him, say

"I've been in the line a week or two," said the lieutenant-colonel, slowly. "I am in deep trouble; my wife is dying at our home in the interior of Pennsylvania, and my application for a furlough for two weeks was peremptorily refused yesterday by my colonel. My God! what can I do? If I go home, my colonel will surely brand me a deserter. I shall be arrested on my return,—and shall military etiquette keep me away from my dying wife?"

Mr Lincoln was visibly affected. "Never mind, young man," said he, "we'll try and fix this matter." He pulled a card from his vest pocket, and as he leaned against the broad oaken door of the Seward mansion, after the secretary had handed him a lead-pencil, he wrote on the back of the visiting card:—

Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War:—

It is my desire that Lieut-Col — be granted leave of absence for 15 days to see his dying wife.

A. LINCOLN.

The officer trembled like a leaf, speechless with emotion, and as he was hastening away, Lincoln, as if to conceal his own feelings, playfully shook his index finger at the officer, and said, "If I ever catch you in Washington again I'll make a brigadier-general of you."

Mr Seward said: "Mr Lincoln made no further allusion to the incident, except to say when they entered the house: 'I reckon Napoleon the First was right when he said, 'the great heart makes the good soldier.'"

President Lincoln possessed to an eminent degree candor,—a word which comes from the Latin, and freely translated means "whiteness of soul." When he was a candidate for renomination, he did not disguise his anxiety to go back to the White House for four years more, "to finish," as he quaintly expressed it, "the great job the people had given him to do."

I have said Mr Lincoln was a consummate politician. His cabinet contained three men who were candidates for the presidency before the Chicago convention which nominated him,—Bates of Missouri, Cameron of Pennsylvania, and Seward. Yet these were his most devoted and trusted counselors and allies. When there was any misunderstanding in the cabinet, William H. Seward would tie himself to Auburn, and in an oracular utterance he would praise the "divine Stanton," and restore peace to a distracted cabinet. Bennett the elder, of the New York Herald, attacked Mr Lincoln's administration remorselessly, for alleged favoritism shown to Cooke & Co, the bankers. James Gordon Bennett was offered the mission to England, with the understanding that he would not accept it. But the attacks against Lincoln were changed to subterfuge denunciation of Salmon P. Chase, whose pronounced desire to succeed Mr Lincoln made the president uncomfortable, and caused Secretary Chase to give up the treasury portfolio.

But even here magnanimity was shown, or two weeks before Chase left the cabinet he asked Mr Lincoln to sign the commission of Chase's nomination for collector of Buffalo. Lincoln signed the commission without a word. I remonstrated with him for putting his rival's friend into power, in a place where he could injure Lincoln in the approaching Baltimore convention. With a merry twinkle in his eye, and a smile that had no taint of malice in it, he looked down on me and said: "I reckon we are strong enough to stand it." Chase, even out of the cabinet, was still formidable as a presidential candidate. And, added to this, Montgomery Blair, Lincoln's postmaster-general, became an avowed candidate for the succession. The a hath bounds, but the deep desire of the Blair family for office had none.

Henry Winter Davis's animosity against Montgomery Blair had much to do with the inspiration and antagonism of his opposition to Abraham Lincoln's ideas of reconstruction. Winter Davis could have been named in place of Hannibal Hamlin as vice-president at Chicago, but he declined the same place was again offered to Seward and Thaddeus Stevens.

brilliant and versatile lawyer, Lyman Tremaine of New York.

Meeting Davis of Maryland in the rotunda of the capitol in May, I said, "Will you accept a place on the ticket with Lincoln, for vice-president?"

He was as proud as Lucifer before his fall. I recall his scornful look, and his reply: "Vice-president behind that thing in the White House—No!"

But he lived to regret his hasty decision, and Winter Davis died a thoroughly disappointed politician, of great and commanding powers.

Later on in the same year I stood near Lincoln at a public reception. Vicksburg and Gettysburg had come and gone. Montgomery Blair, with a presidential bee in his bonnet big as a bumble-bee, had gone with the twining woodbine, when he woke up in the morning and found a laconic note, in pencil, from Lincoln, saying:—

"The time has come."

Blair's decapitation pleased Winter Davis, for the Maryland factions walked over ashes thickly covering fires, and he began to call at the White House receptions. Lincoln saw him standing in the crowd in the reception-room, but evidently averse to coming near him. "Well," said this gentle, tranquil spirit, "I am glad to see Winter Davis here. He has not darkened these doors for two years."

Near Davis stood a tall, well-formed, middle-sized man, with aquiline nose and soldierly bearing. It was Gen Meade. With more feeling than I ever knew him to display, Lincoln touched my arm, and said: "There's Gen Meade,—a good soldier, but he missed the opportunity of his life when he failed to cut to pieces Lee's army at Falling Waters."

It has been contended with great vehemence that our great Union victories nominated and elected Abraham Lincoln for a second term. This statement is not supported by the history of that period. Seward always hoped to be president, even while staying the rash hands of that "Passionate Pilgrim," Andrew Johnson of Tennessee; and you may trace the annals of chivalry back to Charlemagne without finding a devotion more tender or more loyal than that of William H. Seward for that great, meek, gentle, tranquil spirit, Abraham Lincoln,—the product of the composite and irregular civilization of the western country half a century ago.

Hannibal Hamlin, vice-president, did not think the victorious march of our armies elected Lincoln. He wrote:—

BANGOR, July 11, 1889.

Dear Sir: Your letter reached me yesterday. I remember you quite well. In my judgment, the renomination of President Lincoln was not solely due to the victories of our armies in the field. Our people had absolute faith in his unquestioned honesty and in his great ability, the purity of his life, and in his administration,—they were the great primary causes that produced the result, stimulated undoubtedly by our victories in the field. Such is my decided opinion, and I have no doubt about it as I express it to you.

Yours very truly,

H. HAMLIN.

The following letter from the great commander of Pennsylvania, Thaddeus Stevens, when Congress was in session the entire summer, throws some light on an important and interesting period of our national history:—

WASHINGTON, July 6, 1866.

Dear Sir: I have to-day received both your letter and your telegram asking me to make a speech in New York city against Andrew Johnson's "policy." First, as to the letter: You ask me about Abraham Lincoln's renomination. It came about in the most natural manner. There will be no more men like Abraham Lincoln in this century. There was no reason why he should be "swapped" in crossing the stream. I approved of Gen Cameron's memorial of the Pennsylvania Legislature to the people, urging a second term for Abraham Lincoln, and I well remember that you followed suit with the Legislature of your own state.

Second, as to my making a speech at the Cooper institute, New York city, I would gladly go there; especially, too, as your request is backed by my old friend, Horace Greeley. Say to the editor of the Tribune that I feel it is my duty to stay and fight the beasts at Ephesus, here! Andrew Johnson is a dangerous man. What is his "policy," nobody knows to me, on the earth or under it, can exactly discover. There are not more than five men of absolute courage in either house of Congress. But we are not going to lose this great battle for the liberty of the people.

All I tell Mr Greeley, that in my opinion it is too early to publish anything as to the nomination for the next year.

That direction in this city of all

Adams.

My sympathies, down to a very recent date, have been entirely with Mr Chase. But you will be surprised to know that Gen Grant came to my house on Capitol hill a few nights ago, and after locking the door, said:—

"Mr Stevens, I know that you have been in doubt as to my position, but I came here to tell you where I stand. In the not improbable event of a conflict between Andrew Johnson and the Congress of the United States, I will be found standing by this Congress."

This statement lifted a load from my mind. Johnson is an aggressive man, with little intellect and less real courage, obstinate and ignorant, believing thoroughly in himself, but he possesses a rough fidelity to his friends.

And now that we can put our finger on Grant, I am clear that he will be nominated for president, and elected. I no longer feel at liberty to fight Grant. You can tell Mr Greeley this, for I know he is devoted to the chief justice. God does reign, and I have now no fear of losing what has cost us so much. But I do fear the reign of organized lawlessness in the South. Johnson calls himself the Moses of the colored race, but he is a "Moses" who will never get out of the bullrushes.

THADDEUS STEVENS.

That the president was alarmed at the threatened revolt in the republican party there can be no doubt. But he never swerved in his course, but was in the habit of saying, with engaging frankness: "The way to get an office is to deserve it; and if I don't deserve a re-election, I will not mourn at the prospect of laying down these burdens."

When cabinet differences became dangerous enough to threaten a dissolution of the cabinet, he ceased to call his constitutional advisers together, and for over a year they had no formal cabinet session; and when 20 United States senators called upon him in a body, intent on complaining to the president of Stanton's conduct of the war, the president's sense of humor did not desert him, and he told a story about Blondin crossing Niagara. "Would you," said Mr Lincoln, "when certain death waited on a single false step on the part of the celebrated rope-walker,—would you cry out, 'Blondin! stoop a little more! Go a little faster! Slow up! Lean more to the north! Lean a little more to the South?' No. You would keep your mouths shut. Now we are doing the best we can. We are pegging away at the rebels. We have as big a job on hand as was ever intrusted to mortal hands to manage. The government is carrying an immense weight. Don't badger it. Keep silent, and we'll get you safe across."

In the midst of these plots and counterplots in regard to the presidential succession, Simon Cameron returned from Europe. He had been minister to Russia. Though Mr Lincoln had asked for his resignation, in response to the clamor against this common-sense statesman, who possessed undoubted courage, and who was distinguished for unyielding fidelity to his friends, I have it from Gen Cameron's own lips that there was never any change in the pleasant relations between the president and the Pennsylvania senator, whom he had chosen as his war minister. On the contrary, Edwin M. Stanton was made secretary of war chiefly on the recommendation of Gen Cameron and John W. Forney, the latter having won President Lincoln's undying friendship and confidence by his gallant fight against his former friends in the anti-Lecompton struggle. Gen Cameron said, in an interview three months before he died:—

"I believe the time had come to make public expression of the popular confidence in Mr Lincoln, and the general popular desire for his renomination. The Wade-Davis manifesto had made a profound impression on a powerful coterie of leading politicians in the East, who thought they had not been consulted sufficiently in the management of the war. Henry Winter Davis was an 'off ox' in politics, but he was a brilliant, strong, and courtly man and his name stood for southern republicanism, and his colleague in the political revolt, bold Ben Wade, was a power in the state of Ohio,—and as a radical leader he was strong in the nation. I went to Washington and had a talk with Zachariah Chandler of Michigan,—a man with the courage of a Numidian lion; as

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN AND COBDEN

Controversy over the British loan has renewed interest in the attitude of Great Britain toward the Union during the Civil War. The name of Richard Cobden has often been mentioned, and with the exception of John Bright, his voice was more often heard than that of any other Englishman, pleading the cause of the North in the War of the Rebellion. The fact that he was an admirer of Abraham Lincoln makes the following observations timely just now:

On Easter Sunday 1865, the day after Lincoln's death, word reached Washington that Cobden had passed away; so Lincoln was spared the pain which the notification of his English friend's death would have brought. Cobden expired, however, on April 2, but news did not travel as rapidly then as now. Of course, Cobden could not have anticipated that his own death notice and the account of Lincoln's death would appear in the American papers at the same time. It would have given Cobden great satisfaction if he could have lived long enough to have learned of the successful culmination of the war, but this was denied him by the interval of a few days.

Lincoln and Cobden were brought up under conditions very much the same, both having been sons of small farmers. They were born about the same time, Cobden in 1805 and Lincoln four years later. The editors of Harper's Weekly commented on Cobden's loyalty to the United States in these words:

"Like all the English liberals, Mr. Cobden has been one of our firmest and truest friends during the rebellion. He had been twice in this country and understood our politics. Still better, he understood the eternal law that prevents injustice in an enlightened people from being permanently profitable; and although not of a sanguine temperament, and knowing the condition of the country and the spirit of the rebellion, he was conscious of the terrible task before us, yet he sincerely believed it would be accomplished."

James Matlock Scovel who claims to have delivered letters from Abraham Lincoln to Richard Cobden gives us this interesting account of the statement which Cobden made about Lincoln on one of these visits: "This century has produced no man like him. Napoleon said, 'The great heart makes the great soldier.' Lincoln is not only a man of great heart, but he is a man of excellent understanding. The moral philosophers tell us that the intellect works best through the sensibilities. And he is a man who has risen from manual labor to the presidency of a great people, and to me he seems to be the one man God has raised up to give courage and enthusiasm to a people unused to the arts of war, fighting what seems to me to be a doubtful battle, in the greatest conflict of modern times. I like Mr. Lincoln's intense veneration for what is true and good. His sense of justice, is exalted, and yet, while he has never studied statesmanship in modern schools, he is capable of writing, at times, monumental English. He has some of the same characteristics that made William the Silent great; and like Azeglio, the Italian statesman he abjured the political finesse of Mac-

hiavelli, but rests his claims to victorious statesmanship on his wonderful good sense and his absolute good faith. His reason seems to rule despotically over his other faculties, and his conscience and his heart are ruled by his reason. It is Pascal who says sublimity is often encountered in daily life and I know of nothing more sublime than the patience of your American president. He seems to be bent on making a republic the great stature of an honest man. I speak of your struggle as doubtful, because Mr. Lincoln will have more to contend against in the hostility of foreign powers than in the shattered and scattered resources of the confederacy."

Immediately after Cobden's death the Paris correspondent of the New York Tribune was allowed the privilege of copying some of the correspondence which Cobden had recently carried on with an American citizen named Balch, then in France. Three excerpts from his letters are of interest to Lincoln students. The first one dated "Midhurst, January 3, 1865" follows:

"I think it depends entirely on the discretion of your own authorities at Washington to remain at peace with all the world until your civil war is ended. I do not say that you have not grievances; but one quarrel at a time, as Mr. Lincoln says, is enough for a nation or an individual. With the British government I do not think, on the whole, you have as much to be angry about as to be grateful for what it has refused to do."

In the month of February on the 17th, Cobden wrote Balch:

"There never was a more absurd canard than that invented by the Southern sympathizers—that England and France contemplated an intervention; and there is almost as great absurdity in the programme which the same party has cut out for you when the war ends—viz. that you are to begin a war with France or England or all the world."

The last excerpt is from a letter written to Balch two weeks before Cobden's death. It was a letter of advice on the financial difficulties which would arise after the war. Dated "Midhurst, March 12, 1865" it follows:

"I have great faith in the aggregate intelligence of your country whenever its attention is forced by adverse circumstances to a serious study of politics. As soon as the war is over, it will be found that you have a great financial difficulty to deal with. We have gone through it all. Political economy, like chemistry or mechanics, is universal in the operation of its laws. You can no more disregard or fail to imitate our financial policy in raising your future revenue than you can reject our locomotives or our last improvement in dyeing calicos."

The following joint tribute was paid to Cobden and Lincoln at the time when the deaths were announced simultaneously: "The two men lived for the same great purpose. The true interest of the people of England and of America have lost two of their noblest friends in Abraham Lincoln and Richard Cobden."

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